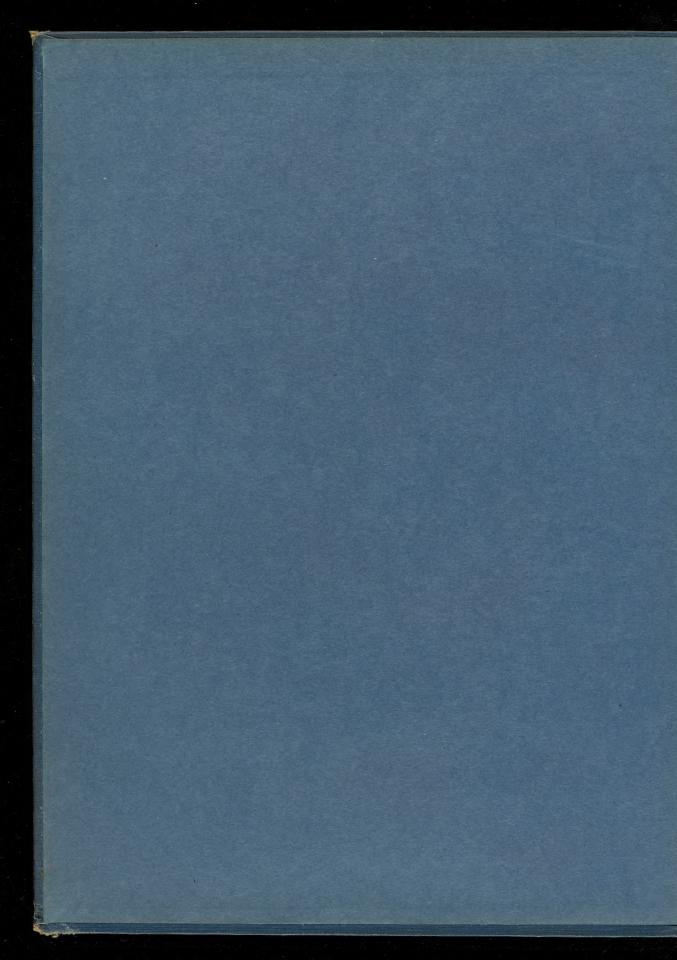
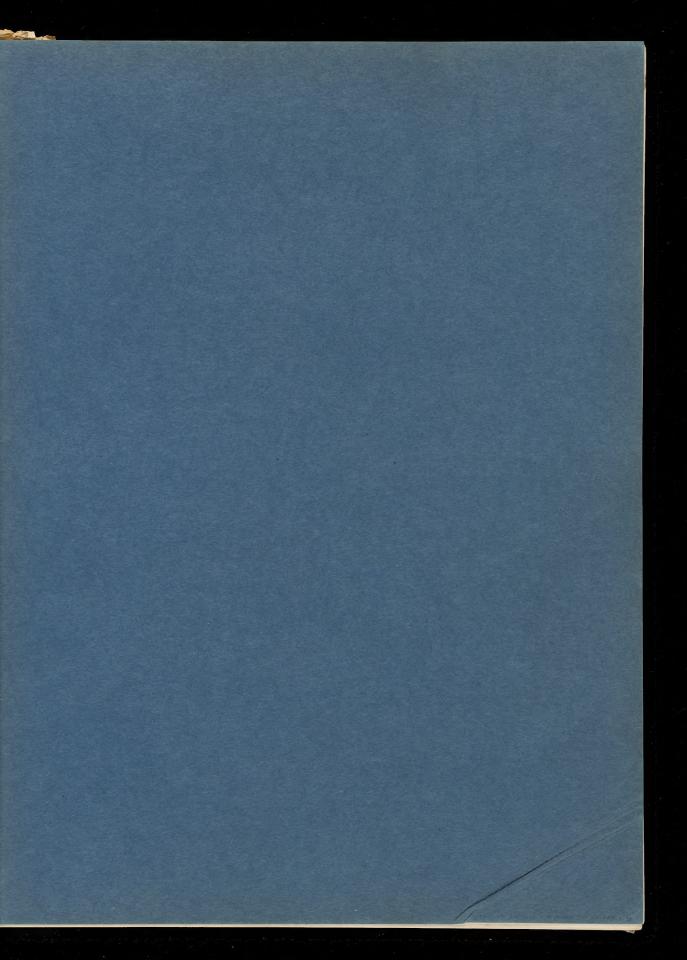
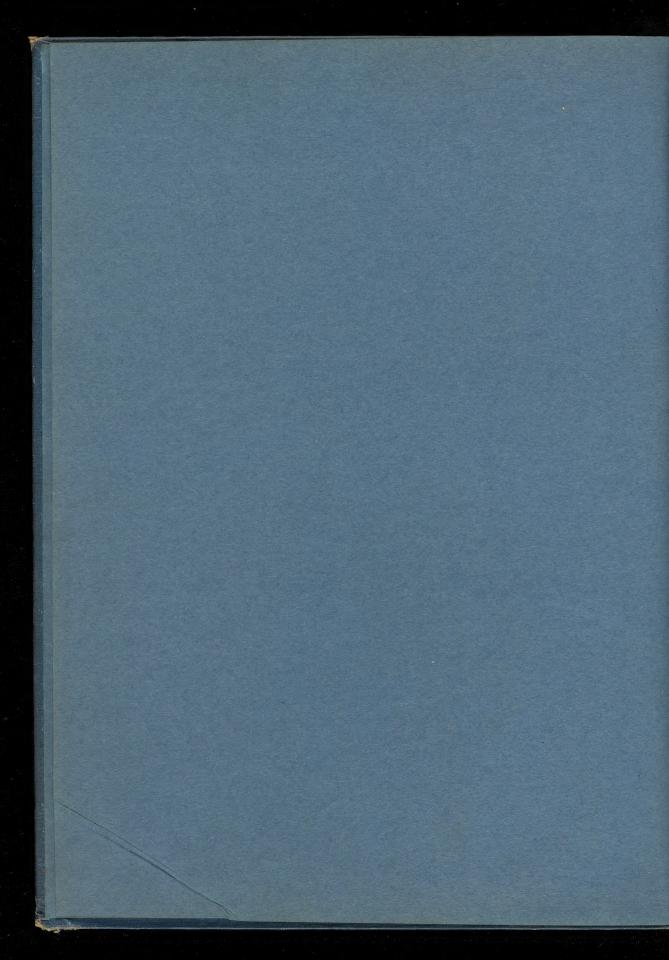
MORE SMALL ITALIAN VILLAS & FARMHOUSES

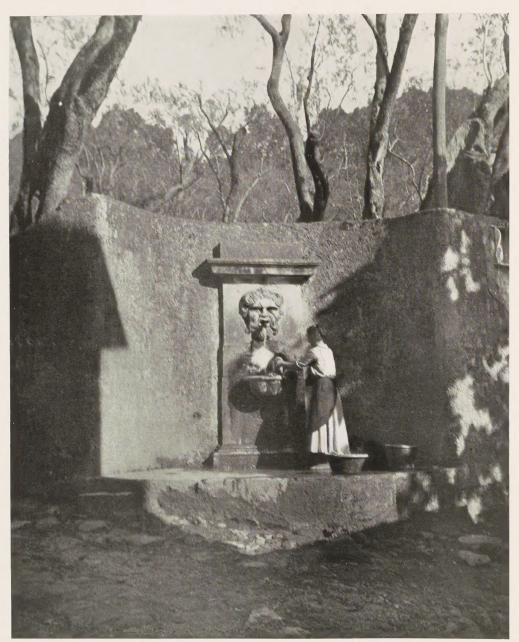
GUY LOWELL











FOUNTAIN NEAR PIETRASANTA, TUSCANY



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Villa Rotonda

PREFACE

THE pleasure in compiling a book like this comes from the many memories it calls up of the good friends who have made the work possible by their kindly help, hospitality and encouragement.

First of all I would thank all those who so generously helped me in Italy, and especially Colonel Ragione and Captain Cacciapuoti of the Italian Army, who made it possible for me to take photographs freely in the zone of combat and throughout Italy. All but a dozen of the photographs were made by me during the last year of the war, six are by Anderson, two by Alinari, and four are from that part of the Tyrol which I saw redeemed by Italy.

The charming pencil sketches by Edgar I. Williams and by Harold R. Shurtleff were made some in Italy, and some from material gathered there. Those of Palladian villas are redrawn partly in accordance with the dimensions and drawings in Palladio's own book, partly in accordance with notes and with photographs which I made myself. It seemed of particular interest to try and show what the villa surroundings had been and what they looked like when seen in the 17th Century by the great English Architects, whose Palladian adaptations in England inspired much that is interesting in our own Colonial architecture.





Garden Wall, Lake Albano

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CHAPTER I.

"There is indeed something divine about Palladio's designs which may be exactly compared to the creation of the great poets."

GOETHE'S ITALIENISCHE REISE.



Firenzuola

ASARI, some three hundred years ago, in writing of his great contemporary, the architect Palladio, tells us that if all the buildings designed by the great master could be brought together they would make a veritable city. If to that imaginary group of noble buildings so assembled were added those that owe their general scheme, their stately and satisfying proportions, their severe but beautifully combined details to the hands of faithful and avowed disciples of Palladio, we would find in this imaginary city of Palladian buildings, not only the religious edifices, the palaces and the villas of Venetia, but great churches, public buildings and noble country estates of England,—the works of Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, James Gibbs or Sir William Chambers;—and, because of the influence in turn of these apostles of Palladio on our own architects, we should by rights expect to find much of our Colonial work from America gathered there too. It would be a fair city, this city of

collected Palladian architecture, with splendid churches, noble palaces, cool fountains, lovely country houses,—with the gorgeous pageantry of Veronese and Zelotti on the frescoed walls of the Italian Villas,—with the carvings of Grinling Gibbons decorating the great buildings of England,—with the delicate work of Samuel McIntire adorning the American houses. St. Martin-in-the-Fields and St. Mary-le-Strand would be there; and Whitehall; and, from the bank of the Thames, Chiswick, inspired by the Villa Capra near Vicenza. And surely our Homewood, and the White House, and the great houses on the James River would be there too; and, were we to include the conscientious work of our modern architects, who have followed in the footsteps of the Vicenza master or his disciples, there would be fine houses from the shores of Long Island and the banks of the Hudson.

Inigo Jones it was who accepted the established rules of the Italian architects of the sixteenth century, and who, returning to England after studying in Italy in 1604, twenty-four years after the death of Palladio, introduced into England the general forms devised and described by him. Thus not many years after Palladio's death his book describing the classical orders and showing how they might be used on modern buildings became Inigo Jones' text book. It was Palladio who first used for the front porch of a country house the motive that the architects of classical times had used for their temple fronts. Following his example such classical motives were frequently used in England, and later in America, where we so often see the porch with columns and pediment on our Colonial buildings.

To understand how completely the English drew inspiration direct from Palladio, it would be well to read the introduction by Charles Latham to the third volume of "In English Homes," in which he says, "Inigo Jones was the great architect who made what may be described as a completely new departure in domestic architecture in his ripe Palladian manner * * * . The desire of the architects of England in the 17th century was to adopt the Italian manner in its entirety." This desire, says J. A. Symonds, was due "to the facility with which Palladio's principles might be assimilated."

But, since he was a contemporary of Palladio's, when he imagined such a city Vasari was thinking only of such buildings as are in the neighborhood of Vicenza; and it is those buildings, which existed when he wrote his life of the architect, which today make the old city on the Bacchiglione a rich museum of Palladian architecture; while the many villas in the countryside around it make it extraordinarily worthy of study for us Amer-



Small Casino at Bertesina, attributed to Palladio

icans who would know the sources from which our own Colonial country houses come. These Palladian villas are, today, often less beautiful than those of Rome or Florence, for they lack the carefully preserved villa gardens. They often lack the moss-grown fountains and murmuring cascades; often, too, they lack the variety given by the balustraded terraces and stately steps, rising abruptly, as they do, from the Venetian plains; but they are still of interest to us since they are the type from which so many of our own country houses are evolved, and are similar in scale to much of our modern work; for, "on the platform of Italian and English precedent we have built something of our own."

On one of those hurried Italian trips, which the

busy American architect crowds into the practice of architecture, I made my last pilgrimage, the year before the war, to the city by the Berican Hills. I remember standing in the Piazza before the Basilica,—which Palladio thought his own noblest work, -and wondering what it would have been like to have lived there in the years of its greatness and to have been a gentleman of Vicenza.

It was, however, too wild a flight of fancy, too long a journey into the past, so I climbed into the American motor car, which seemed so incongruous there waiting for me in the old Piazza dei Signori, and called out to my driver to go on, startling the lazy pigeons into swaying whirls to safety. As we drove away I closed my eyes for a moment to fix in my mind the image of the sleepy square with its graceful flanking arcade and slender tower and to conjure up the picture of it filled with its former gay crowd, with music, with uniforms and banners,—a picture of an old world.

And yet a few years later my romantic thought about life as a citizen of Vicenza had,—by the perversity of the gods, and principally of the great god Mars, -become a reality. I was back in Vicenza once more, this time to live for many months in a fine old palace, with stately stairways and halls, designed by Scamozzi, Palladio's first pupil. There was a veritable court of Italian attendants, officers, soldiers and servants, hospitably provided by the Italian Army to make easy the work of a small band of Americans who had come to express to the fighting soldiers of Italy, through the American Red Cross, America's friendliness and desire to below

So I came strongly under the spell of the great architect and in my leisure moments had an unequalled chance to study his works and his influence,—the more so because we seemed to have gone back to the life of his times. The darkened streets at night, the picturesque uniforms, the capes and the swords, the nearby fighting, the daily trips to the country through the broad farms and fertile vineyards which were still worked with primitive tools, all formed pictures that gradually blotted out the memories of New York skylines and animated electric signs, and enabled me to form a clearer idea of what Italian life had been during the great years of the Renaissance.

I found myself passing by several of Palladio's palaces every day; and when I sat in the Piazza, taking my coffee in front of the Café Garibaldi, there was the Basilica before me, —an enchanting composition with a charm of proportion and a beauty of curve in moulding and in column that gave the same satisfaction which one finds in a classical building when built by Greek workmen. It was quite natural that I should have used my spare hours to study the buildings which were sowed broadcast over the Province of Venetia; and particularly so



Villa at Montecchio Precalcino, by Palladio

because the houses of the Venetian plains are of more than passing interest to us Americans, since many of them show that careful planning which one finds in the Palladian school, where comfort and convenience were studied in their relation to country life. Palladio was not only a great artist, but he was a conscientious architect who did not sacrifice plan and practical arrangements to the desire to design only a beautiful exterior. He says himself in his book, "The artist must often adapt himself to the will of those who pay, rather than to the rule which he would observe," and his common sense and good taste led him to take the utmost pains to adapt his designs to the wants of his time. De Quincy said of him "He seemed not to be trying to do what the ancients did, but that which they would have done if returning to life they had had to adapt themselves to designing for us today"; and he did it with the same skill and the same good taste, and, for that matter, according to the same rules as if he himself had lived in classical times. He was true to the principles which Vitruvius had laid down in his writings sixteen hundred years before.

Since there is no authentic list of his complete works, it has been very difficult to judge merely by the design whether a building is by Palladio or by an apt pupil who worked with the master's book in hand. While the more important work of the Vicenza architect in the city has been much studied and described, only three or four of the villas have been photographed or sketched. So it was not until I tried to examine systematically all the villas, that I realized how much there was of interest of which I could find no modern description.

During the war when gardening labour could not be obtained because even the women and the children, as well as the old men, were working on the crops, and when the country houses in the war zone, large and small alike, were used for military purposes, these buildings were often bare within, the furniture being hidden or removed to a province in less danger of invasion,—bare without, because the decorative verdure was unkempt or destroyed.

Stripped as they were of their softening verdure, as they often appear in the war time photographs of this book, they may be considered all the more easily from the designer's point of view. The relation of void to the mass, of window opening to wall surface, the proportions of harmoniously spaced columns to the supported entablature are the more readily seen.

Hunting out villas had all the pleasure of the chase. To find a villa, and to find that it was complete, at times brought the long walks and the frequent turnings aside from the beaten highway to a satisfactory conclusion. When found, the pleasant proportions of the villa, or even of some fragment that was but a small portion of the whole scheme, was a reward for what at times was a difficult hunt.

Fortunately, Palladio in his own book,-and O. Bertotti Scamozzi, in the carefully edited book he made



Palladio's First Design

describing the master's works, -usually gave the name of the town or village where a villa was situated, though in a province where there were, at times, four or five hamlets of the same name, it did not always define a position exactly. The excellent military maps of the General Staff of the Italian Army however, combined with persistent search, made it possible to find out the present state of them all, excepting for one that was behind the enemy's lines in the invaded territory. Sometimes the search was made difficult by inaccuracies in contemporary descriptions, for at times Palladio would describe a building as if finished when it had never been begun. For instance, Vasari,

his contemporary, in telling of the work of Palladio, describes the Villa Valmarana at Lisiera as having four corner towers; the architect himself showed it in his book with corner towers and with two stories of superposed columns; but it was actually built, and quite charming it is too, with only one story of columns and with no trace of the towers excepting in plan. Yet it was unmistakably Palladian. This particular villa I found mentioned in the Archives of the Inquisition at Venice, because, in 1797, the invading French army had committed acts of vandalism and wanton destruction there; and I myself, on examination, found the bullet marks in the garden statues, where the French infantry had used them for targets. So it has been with the others. Occasionally a short note would mention one of them, but there has been little that enables one to tell their history in the intervening years since O. Bertotti Scamozzi, in 1784, published his four volumes analyzing the works of Palladio. The photographs of several of these smaller, but architecturally important buildings, are I believe, being here published for the first time.

It must not be inferred, however, that all the villas of Venetia were designed by architects of the Palladian school. The fashion of leaving one's house in the city and going for a rest to the country existed all over Italy even in the days of the Roman Empire. The designing of country houses had become a fine art, by the four-teenth century; and, in consequence, there are still today,—besides the later ones due to the Palladian school—many castles and large country houses scattered all over northern Italy that belong to the earlier period of the Renaissance. If I devote in this introductory chapter most of the space to the consideration of the Palladian villas, it is only because, scattered as they are among the others, they seem to stand out with particular interest for us who have followed the influence of the Georgian architecture in England and in America.

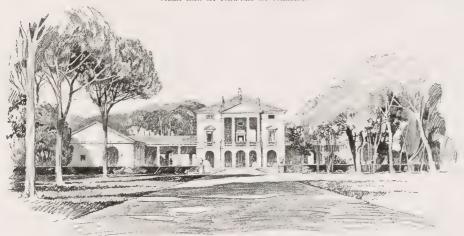
It is to these villas, and more especially the ones designed by Palladio, that I would particularly draw attention, because, in their classic proportions, with their well-studied wall surfaces and with their pleasing scale, they offer interesting suggestions to the designer of country houses today. The Renaissance country house in northern Italy was seldom built of expensive material,—for many of them were of brick, covered with stucco to represent stone; and ornamental sculpture excepting for finials, balustrades and gate posts, was rare. The walls of the interior were often frescoed. Too often these wall paintings were intended to produce the illusion of decorative architecture serving as a framework for sumptuously clad figures. It was debasing the decorative



Villa Valmarana (Plate 53-55) as Designed



VILLA EMO AT FANZOLO BY PALLADIO



DESIGN OF PALLADIAN VILLA NEAR VICENZA



SKETCH FOR VILLA AT CALDOGNO



painters' art to use it to produce the semblance and not the reality of rich marbles, of long collonades, of gilt frames, of carved mouldings. We suspect Palladio at times of luring his client to adopt a too elaborate scheme of building, so that there was too little left for the interior; we even frequently find only a small fraction of an extended country house group completed; some of those mentioned in his book have never even been started; but there are a few that seem complete and correspond with the plans as shown by him. The villa at Maser (Pl. 123) is one. The Villa Emo (Pl. 43) is another; though even there the rear facade is unfinished and the rooms in the long wings that Palladio intended for products of the farm are made over. The Villa Rotonda (Pl. 107) is complete too with its four porticoes, one on each side. Tuckermann, the German critic, thinks this repetition of the columned portico on all four sides shows lack of originality; but it was actually quite delightful when sitting or dining as we frequently did on one of the porches, to have either sun or shade, breeze or shelter, according to the season and always with variety of outlook. The little villa at Fratta (Pl. 103) is again quite like the plans of the architect, but the Villa Tornieri (Pl. 62), as will be seen by comparing the drawing (Pl. 2) which attempts to show the building as designed with the photograph (Pl. 63), -this last of the villa as altered over,-has not been improved by modern elaboration. It is, however, typical of the scheme so frequently adopted for the Venetian villa. There is a central motive resembling a classical temple with columns supporting the pediment of the central portico, behind which there is a large banqueting hall or ball room running from front to rear as it so frequently does in the palaces of Venice itself. It is an admirable arrangement for large banquets and balls so necessary to the fête venitienne. On either side are the lateral wings, much lower than the central mass, and faced with arcades or colonnades where wine can be pressed and grain can be stored. This latter arrangement of out buildings is not confined to the Province of Venetia; we find it in Lombardy (Pl. 51), we find it in Piedmont and in Tuscany (Pl. 69).

Today few of these country houses have their grounds kept up as they were in the sixteenth century, for some of the old engravings show us the luxury and elaboration of the villa surroundings during the great days of the Venetian Republic. Though there has been but little permanent ruin done to these villas during these late years by the Great War, they were nearly all, in the war zone, occupied for some warlike purpose, as will be seen from the ever present soldiers in the photographs and the ugly wires of military telephones that appear in so many of the pictures, -nailed to trees, wound around the necks of the gay figures of shepherdesses and nymphs that surmount the gate posts, or hanging from the buildings like leafless vines. The Villa Giacomelli at Maser was where the commander of a division was billeted with his staff. The Villa Rotonda, as Villa Capra is now called, was occupied by the staff of the British Red Cross. Villa Emo was a hospital where certain charmingly frescoed rooms were used by the American Volunteer Ambulance drivers, and in the wings which Palladio himself said were intended for granaries, cellars and shed, but which actually had been remodelled to serve as master's rooms,-the medical staff of the hospital was billeted. The charming little villa at Fratta was also a hospital, and so the columns are defaced by being whitewashed half way up. This, too, is true of the Villa Tornieri. The Villa Porto was an isolation hospital so that I could only photograph it from a distance. The pavilion at Bertesina was an army blacksmith shop and the casino at Caldogno, a storage warehouse for cannon. The Villa Rezzonico, was a hospital; and in one of the photographs the camouflage which hid the road in front of it from the Austrian gunners can be seen; while on several of the buildings the roof tiles have been painted so as to show the Red Cross, a device which unfortunately frequently attracted enemy airmen on their fiendish air raids against the open towns and peaceful groups of country houses.

CHAPTER II.

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit, Si bleu, si calme! Un arbre, par-dessus le toit, Berce sa palme,

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là Simple et tranquille.

VERLAINE.



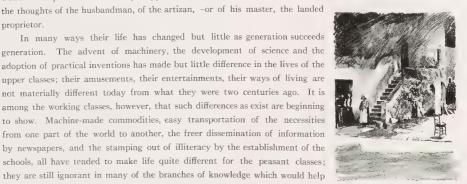
Farmhouse North of Rome

ALKING with their owners, joking with the children of the tenant farmer, sleeping in stately old rooms where the picturesquely-dressed cavaliers and ladies in the frescoes of Zelotti or of Tiepolo looked down on one from the walls, dining in the cool of the evening on the highcolumned porches and loggias, watching a group of Alpini repairing their mountain gun at the farmer's forge in the arcaded outbuilding, listening to the singing peasant women who peacefully fed the chickens and retted the hemp, I came to feel that war had, at frequent intervals and during many generations, been a part of the life of these pleasant, genial countrymen. So, after a few months there, we came to feel that, instead of keeping our eyes downcast and our thoughts fixed on nothing but

the problems created by the war, the work would be better because of the chance that was given us of seeing pleasant and beautiful things as we travelled to and fro for our work.

Many a gate that had for years been locked to all unknown travellers, swung eagerly open in welcoming hospitality to the representatives of the great trans-atlantic ally that was to help save Italy from the hand of the Vandal; many a farmer's wife blew the dying embers into bright flame on the broad hearth under the huge, black smoke-hood in the kitchen alcove to warm the frozen limbs of the forestieri from that far off and mysterious country of America; -many a century-old copper pot held for the first time American canned soup, or condensed milk, that was shared by the travellers and the children of the household alike. And if, in these stately villas or humble farmhouses, eager questions were asked of the foreigners, and long stories were told of the everyday life of the country, it helped to make us feel that we had become a part of the life itself. Surely it was a wonderful experience and a unique opportunity to know and to understand the needs, the life, the individuality,

proprietor. In many ways their life has changed but little as generation succeeds The advent of machinery, the development of science and the adoption of practical inventions has made but little difference in the lives of the upper classes; their amusements, their entertainments, their ways of living are not materially different today from what they were two centuries ago. It is among the working classes, however, that such differences as exist are beginning to show. Machine-made commodities, easy transportation of the necessities from one part of the world to another, the freer dissemination of information by newspapers, and the stamping out of illiteracy by the establishment of the schools, all have tended to make life quite different for the peasant classes; they are still ignorant in many of the branches of knowledge which would help them to better their lot, but they at least know that there is a road to better



Near Pietrasanta



things and many of them are taking advantage of the help that is being freely offered them by the king and the government.

Two or three hundred years ago it was quite different. The countrymen who lived in these small farm buildings which clustered around the country houses of the patricians, were poor, overtaxed, often ill fed, and with no real personal liberty. Often the great land owners came each year to their country places to grind from the peasantry all that they could and when they had once obtained the utmost that they believed could be wrung from their tenants, they moved with all their gorgeous band of courtiers and parasites, of lackeys and of musicians, of guests and of relatives, to their next country place that offered some hope of providing sufficient supplies.

There were of course many kindly and fair-minded proprietors who honestly tried to make the best of conditions, who took an

interest in their peasants, and who made life for the temperamentally cheerful Italian contadino as easy as possible. But though there might be affection, there was no semblance of equality, no honest respect on the part of the patrician for the worker who cultivated his fields, who prepared his food, who produced the wool and the silk in which he was dressed. The gentry that sat in the boxes at the play spat on the crowd in the pit;—the masters that were themselves housed in luxuriantly decorated palaces, provided only overcrowded and insufficient lodging for their workers. That these cottages, these farmhouses were picturesque is undeniable; but that they housed too many human beings and cattle all huddled together is also true. But this crowding does not make them any the less interesting as types of architecture, if put to a reasonable and practical use, for they are both picturesque and original.

Often these farmhouses and the stabling formed a part of the group surrounding the dwelling of the master. Palladio says, "One should have covered porticoes or sheds in order to store the grain which should be proportioned to the crop and to the number of the cattle. They should only be at such a distance from the house that the master can reach them under cover so that he may not be troubled by the rain, or by the heat of the sun, when he goes to inspect his farm. Besides," he naively adds, "these porticoes give an appearance of vastness to the house." To these sheltered porticoes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the guests of the house would repair on a rainy afternoon to hear some aged crone among the peasants tell the legends of the province.

It is interesting to note that the sixteenth century architect considered carefully in his planning the abode of the master and the housing of his crops; but paid little attention to the conveniences and healthiness of the dwelling of the workman. This was, at times, due to the fact that the farm laborers were a part of the household;—and even today one finds in the more remote parts of the country an almost feudal grouping of the dwellings. The men were patient, hard working labourers, with a simple but intelligent outlook on life; the women were well built, fine looking and with strength enough to knock down an amourously inclined macaroni in their masters' following.

Like an old time traveller, I found myself one day last year miles from any inn and obliged to ask for shelter at a large *podere* some distance back from the high road. Its owner, an elderly count, and his countess, were there living on the farm while their two sons fought for Italy. With genuine hospitality they tried to make me feel at home. Dinner was in the large hall and many were



Villa Gate in Venetia



Exterior of Kitchen (Plate 8)

the places at the long table. Where my host and hostess and I sat at the upper end of the table it was raised on a platform two steps high. Then a step lower came the *fattore* or agent and his family; and then another step lower, trailing away into the distance, were seated the farmhands, the women, the children and the shepherds,—these latter silent men of few words. It was just such a meal as had undoubtedly been served in that same hall for many generations. It was the food of the farm—cheese, and bread, fruit and wine; and always the curious eyes of these silent men and women watching the foreigner at the tablehead. Butchers' meat there was none,—just as in past centuries when grazing herds of cattle intended for slaughter were unknown,—there was no coffee nor sugar, though there was honey for one's bread and big bowls of goats' milk, and macaroni with chicken livers; all brought with great solemnity from the vast kitchen visible through the open door.

One peculiarity of many of the kitchens in northern Italy is the alcove, in which the cooking is done, with a hearth raised a foot or more from the level of the surrounding kitchen and with space enough to walk all around the hearth. In cold weather this alcove often is like a small sitting room where the family can warm themselves. If it happens to have windows in it to add the cheer of sunlight, as shown in plate 8, it becomes a very comfortable spot on a cold day. (The exterior of this same kitchen is shown in the sketch on this page.) The cooking in pots over the wood fire of course does not admit of baking, so that an oven where the family bread is baked is usually provided in the courtyard outside (Pg. VII).

Inside, the wide kitchens of these farmhouses glory in their wealth of polished brass and copper, shining with their myriad facets made by the hammer of the coppersmith generations ago, for these utensils are guarded and polished and arranged and rearranged and then handed down to the new generation with pious care. You can be sure that the invading enemy never found them, and never was able to send them back to his own country to be melted up for cartridges.

One day last year during the final battles on the Italian front when the Italians were freeing eastern Venetia from their traditional enemy, the Austrians, driving the enemy day by day before them up those valleys down which they had come in such "haughty security" the year before,—as General Diaz described it in his last war bulletin,—we followed up the valley of the Piave with the advancing troops. The advance was temporarily halted while the bersaglieri and the arditi were bitterly fighting their way into Belluno. We sought the shelter of a farmhouse and decided to warm some tins of soup with the help of the farmer's wife. "Could she lend us a pot?" we asked her. "Were we sure the Austrians, who had been billeted on her farm for a year, were not coming back?" she anxiously asked. We assured her that she was safe.

Then came a great digging in the garden, followed by a great scrubbing and polishing in the *cantina*. The mother with her strong, bare arms gave the first cleaning with handfuls of bran, the boy with a black cloth would then polish and the daughter gave a final burnish that made the pots shine like gold. Gently the women were crying over their long-hidden



treasures; but they were the tears of joy for liberation from the hand of the oppressor and the hope of an early return of husband and of father from the war. All the wealth of hammered pans and jugs shining and cheerful had reappeared to decorate this hospitable kitchen by the roadside an hour or two after the enemy had been driven away. The gentle farmer's wife in years to come will show her treasures to her children and to her neighbors and tell how she kept them from the enemy and how their own first meal as liberated Italians was of food brought from America and was cooked by a crowd of genial *American i*.



CHAPTER III.

"Al men, specially straungers, had so muche libertee there, . . . and generally of all thynges, so thou offende no man prinately, no man shall offende the: whyche undoubtedly is one principall cause, that draweth so many straungers thither."

THOMAS' HISTORY OF ITALYE (1561).



Farinhouse Near Turin

HE love of the Italian for the pleasure of country life, his love for all that grows and is free, his love of colour, his love for sparkling waters, led to the building of the splendid villas of the Renaissance, and brought about in the seventcenth and eighteenth centuries a general exodus to the country as soon as the summer heat made the city streets oppressive. Then it was that, against what Theophile Gautier called the "most fairylike background that was ever presented to the imagination of the poet," there grew up in Italy, but more especially in Venetia, the most luxurious, the most joyous, and perhaps the most corrupt life in all Europe. But its very corruption was the result of thoughtlessness for the morrow, rather than of deeply rooted desire for wrong; it was

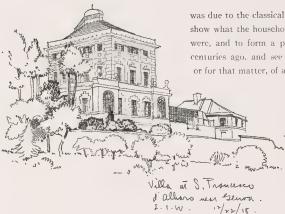
the exaggeration and the folly of the decline of a people that had once, centuries before, reached the summit of greatness only to fall back to utter stagnation. But in its joyousness, in its colourfulness, in its generous hospitality, there is much for us that is pleasant to remember; for whatever is joyous and sparkling and kindly, is worth recording.

So Veronese and Titian and Tintoretto found it; and painted their magnificent pageants ablaze with sunlight, against a background of Palladian architecture. Their personages were dressed in splendid raiment, gorgeous in velvet, lace and brocade, always worldly and proud. Their paintings "well suited a nation of merchants, in whom the association of the country home and the exchange mingled with the responsibilities of the Senate and the passions of princes." So it was with Watteau painting the Fête Venetienne, so it was with Goldoni, describing in his comedies of Venetian life, with his humorous but trenchant pen, the excesses, the joyousness, the absurdities of life in the country. Indeed Chatfield Taylor rightly compares the Venetian life of the times of Goldoni to present day life in Newport or in Aiken.

What was life like in the great country homes that made such a luxurious background to the colourful country life of the time?

The story of the evolution of the Renaissance villas of the Roman Campagna, of Tuscany, of Lombardy, and of their descent from the skillfully laid out country houses of the time of the Roman Empire has been traced in an earlier volume;—and whether, as therein stated, the development of these villas of the Italian Renaissance along classical lines, was a logical and utilitarian outgrowth from the social and practical needs of the times,—or, as Geoffrey Scott suggests in his "Architecture of Humanism,"





was due to the classical taste of the times, it would be of interest to show what the household requirements of the great patricians really were, and to form a picture of country life in Italy two or three centuries ago, and see what it offered by way of rustic simplicity, or for that matter, of artificially Arcadian delights.

Fortunately Italy became during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the favorite haunt of the letter writing traveller from northern Europe, who not only left careful descriptions of the buildings and scenery of those days, but whose notes in combination with the stories and biographies of men like Boccaccio, the weaver of romances in the fourteenth century; of Cardinal Bembo, the scholar, and his friend Castiglione, the courtier, in the sixteenth century:

of Goldoni, the writer of comedies; of Gozzi, the writer of fables: of Parini, the poet of liberty, and Casanova, the adventurer in the eighteenth century, have made it possible to form an accurate idea of the social conditions and of Italian country life in past generations.

We see from the letters of Englishmen and Frenchmen who made the grand tour during those centuries of picturesque travelling, we learn from the biographies written by the pleasure-loving Italians themselves,—we can even see ourselves from the works of art gathered together in Italy's many museums, that the patricians and their courtiers, the powerful burghers and the wealthy traders, gave themselves up to a life of pleasure with even greater freedom than did the upper classes of the other countries of Europe. Greater extravagance, too existed than in France. Endless sums of money had to be ground from the peasantry; and, as in France, so in Italy, the arrogance and thoughtlessness of the aristocracy did much to bring about the same revolutionary unrest. But in spite of the fact that there were in Italy, as elsewhere, numerous philanthropists and reformers who saw the handwriting on the wall and uttered the unpleasant and disturbing warning that the barriers between the different classes must be levelled, for those who lost sight of the suffering and hardships of the working classes, it must have been a joyous life.

In this chapter I shall not attempt to deal with the great individual personages of history, but shall follow the suggestion of President de Brosses, who writing from Italy in 1739 said, "You would surely prefer that I should tell you of the manners and customs than of the buildings and paintings." It is the story of a pleasure loving and frivolous aristocracy, which went really more to the country because it was the fashion to go there, and because of the pleasure to be found there, than with the idea of taking their duties as landed proprietors seriously by trying to make their land productive or their tenants contented.





Palladian Villa on the Brenta Canal

It was in the subject lands of Venice, in that Province of Venetia where the peaceful fields and vineclad hillsides lie to the eastward and to the northward from the city of the sparkling canals, that the extravagances of the patricians were perhaps most in evidence. It was in the green and fertile Province where later Byron, Shelley and Browning lived, the rich Province where a great Republic arose, flourished and fell into decay, the Province where the traders of the northern countries came to bargain for the rich merchandise that the seafaring traders of the Venetian Republic brought from the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean for

> "Once had she held the Golden East in fee And was the safeguard of the West."

It was in that Province where the carnival used to last six months out of the year; and where Harlequin and Columbine danced nightly on the hedge-framed lawns by the Brenta, or floated by moonlight far inland along the myriad waterways reflecting whole starry constellations; it was in that Province where, in all Europe during the eighteenth century, life was the gayest.

In spite of the fact that Europe frequently came to northern Italy to fight her wars, northern Italy and particularly Venetia, was prosperous. The picturesqueness of Venice itself, and her subject cities on the mainland; and the fertility of the farms in the plains, all contributed to the luxurious life of the patricians. We see the gaiety of Venice depicted in the paintings that have come down to us, we find it described in the vivacious comedies of Goldoni, we see traces of it in the rich decorations and magnificent furnishings of the thousands of villas still standing and maintained throughout Venetia. It was the Province where life was one continual festa. Even during those recent months when Venetia was the war front, and, for that matter, the whole active Italian war front, it still showed traces of its former gaiety in the life of the townsmen and countrymen alike.

Many of the villas on the mainland of Venetia covered, with their outbuildings, a vast area; and it was a constant surprise to me as I travelled from one part of the province to another to see how many large palaces and patrician farms were distributed throughout the comparatively small province which lies within a few miles of

Venice. During the Renaissance when few members of the patrician families indulged in commerce, and when, therefore there was no commercial need for them to continue living throughout the year in the same place,—we find that it was an almost universal habit for the rich Venetians to leave the City of the Lagoons during the summer season and go to their country places a few miles inland. In fact, this exodus from the city at the customary seasons was so universal that those who were too poor to have houses both in the city and in the country, complained bitterly that they could not go in *villeggiatura* like their more



fortunate friends. In Venice the carnival season lasted six months out of the year, and this in itself provided excuses for all kinds of *festas* and routs, but when the carnival was over, the city would empty and its gaieties were resumed in the country.

The house party of those days seems to have differed little, excepting in its greater spontaneity, from those of the twentieth century. Everyone seemed to vie in outdoing his neighbor in the splendour of his entertainments and in the show of hospitality that was made. The traveller from other lands need only bring the proper letters of introduction and he was an honoured guest at every house where he stopped. Invited guests were cordially welcomed. Gasparo Gozzi thus wrote to a friend:

"When you arrive a dozen nightingales, hidden in a hedge, will welcome you. I shall be on the threshold and shall run to meet you with outstretched arms when you arrive. You will be escorted by capons, ducks, chickens, guinea fowl, which, together with the peacocks, will make circles around you. You must be patient because it is impossible for these animals not to come and tell you how obedient they are and how for you they will allow themselves to be broiled, spitted, and cut in pieces. Our bread is white, like the flakes of snow that has just fallen; but we shall have above all such a joyousness of heart that we shall not be able to sing all the time, because our voice will give out long before our pleasure at having you here."—a truly pleasant welcome.

The President de Brosses, writing to France in 1739, says of the countryside between Vicenza and Padua "There is no opera scene more beautiful nor better arranged than this country. Each tree covered with grape vines makes a dome of foliage from which hang four garlands of vines that attach it to the four other neighbouring trees, and this borders the road as far as one can see." I travelled that same road scores of times myself. The scenery is unchanged and the method of cultivation is today exactly what it was one hundred and eighty years earlier when de Brosses rumbled over it in a post chaise and said that his back at the end of the day would tell the story of the roughness of the roads, and wished that the inns where they slept were made of cotton wool. The road bed today is very different; and, for that matter, it was so during the war, for there are no better automobile roads in Europe than in the Venetian plains. But it is no wonder that the Venetians whenever possible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, travelled by water along the far reaching canals and in house boats that offered every comfort.

Goldoni describes a trip he made as a youth with a troupe of wandering comedians in a horse drawn house-boat. "There were twelve actors and actresses, a prompter, a mechanician, a costumer, eight servants, four maids, two nurses, children of all ages, monkeys, dogs, cats, parrots, birds, pigeons, a lamb; it seemed like Noah's ark—everyone was well lodged." No matter he says if the leading *jeune première* flew into a rage, she was calmed, though with difficulty, with a cup of chocolate. No matter if a little money harmlessly changed hands after luncheon at faro. They played, they laughed, they joked until the bell announced dinner. And for those hungry days of the eighteenth century what a meal it was! "Macaroni, they devoured three soup bowls full, beef à la mode, cold chicken, veal, fruit, excellent wine; ah what a good meal! ah what an appetite!"

Antonio Longo who owned a villa by the Brenta in the eighteenth century, invited his guests to a floating masquerade. As they passed the house of the Senator Corner at Mira they found it illuminated and a dance going on which lasted till the following day when all the guests of both parties were invited to dinner. During dinner the Senator sceing that his guests who had had too much to eat already were refusing a dish of pheasants, ordered them to be reserved for the next day. A distinguished and notoriously hospitable guest laughingly proclaimed the stinginess of the host, who joking in turn, asked his critical guest what right he had to complain, as he was always dining out but never offered so much as a glass of water to anyone. The genial guest answered by standing up and inviting the assembled company to dine the next day, assuring them "that all dishes brought to the table would either be eaten or would not appear again." It all ended by a contest in supplying luxurious entertainment for the assembled company which lasted ten days.

Wandering bands of holiday makers would form and travel from house to house, spending a few days in each place, moving on when the entertainment seemed no longer sufficient. Some who had villas of their own expected to make return for this hospitality by holding open house in turn; others, knowing that they could make no return, tried to contribute their share by singing, rhyming, joking, dancing, acting,—all those minor graces so necessary to the true Venetian festivities; no one could afford to be old, no one had a thought of the morrow, no one allowed himself to be otherwise than seem happy; boredom had to be banished by continual merrymaking. One is awakened at night to find a cavalcade of a score of ladies and gentlemen from a neighbouring estate, many of them unknown, who expect shelter and entertainment for a week or two at a time. Among them the social parasite was always present; and a character in one of Goldoni's plays tells how he pays his way:

"I am the spice, Madam, of all house parties. If one wishes to dance, I dance with anyone, with or without music. I can sing all parts or solo, no one is as skillful as I in folk songs. At table everyone laughs because of me, I make splendid rhymes. When I am slightly tipsy I'm delicious, pay no regard to anyone, accept any indignities, I am the butt of all practical joking, you will hear them all cry, 'O what a devil, what a sorcerer.'"

Truly the life of the party!

Trips by barge down the inland waterways, while singing songs from the lantern-lighted deck, to the delight of the peasants gathered on the banks; picnics in the meadows where the grape vines hang in long festoons from tree to tree; comedies acted on the lawn near the lemon garden pool bordered by its pink marble balustrade, or in the fairylike garden theatre with its clipped hedges and terraced seats, where the actors and spectators interrupt their play to kneel as the chapel bell tolls the *Ave Maria*; hunts during the early morning mist that drifts in from the lagoons, through the chestnut groves that clothe the hills of Asolo; words whispered through a fan while the nightingales sing their springtime accompaniment and the fireflies add their dancing light to that of the tiny colored lanterns swinging in the breeze, and then early mass in the old chapel, attended in slippers and a cloak thrown hurriedly over the nightdress. Rising at noon, they went to bed at sunrise.

It is not the picture of what the happy few were doing; but what a whole province did; it lasted from the cradle to the grave. "This was the carnival without masks, the contest in luxury, the decadence before the fall." It was however, the ashes of life from which there was to arise two generations later, a unified and greater Italy, capable first of throwing off the Austrian yoke and gathering then such strength that after another two generations she was finally able to break down the power of the hereditary enemy.



MORE SMALL ITALIAN VILLAS AND FARMHOUSES



ALLADIAN VILLA AT FRATTA



MORE SMALL ITALIAN VILLAS AND FARMHOUSES



VILLA PORTO NEAR DUEVILLE, DESIGNED BY CALDERARI





COLLAGE NEAR MIRA, VENETIA





COLTAGE IN THE TYROL



SMALL VILLA AT OSPITALETTO



COTTAGE NEAR MIRA, VENETIA



VILLA AT OSPITALETTO





FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA





INTERIOR OF RITCHEN IN VENETIA TOO OLD TO FIGHT





VILLA GATE IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA





VILLA NEAR DUEVILLE





VILLA AT MONTECCHIO PRECALCINO





VILLA FONTANIVE





VILLA FONTANIVE NEAR VICENZA





VILLA NEAR SCHIO





SMALL HOUSE SOUTH OF BOLOGNA





CASINO IN THE VILLA BORGHESI, ROME





LARGE VILLA OUTSIDE BOLOGNA





LARGE VILLA OUTSIDE BOLOGNA



$\label{eq:more_small_italian_villas_and_farmhouses} \\$



HOUSE IN ISLO





SMALL HOUSE OUTSIDE OF ROME





SMALL VILLA OUTSIDE FLORENCE





FARMHOU'SE EAST OF VERONA





VILLA NEAR MONTEBELLUNA





CASINO AT CALDOGNO, DESIGNED BY PALLADIO





CHAPLE OF VILLA NEAR MONTEGALDA, VENETIA





ILLA AT FIESOLE





REAR OF VILLA AT FIESOLE



VILLA NEGRI NEAR ASOLO





A VILLA IN THE PLAINS NEAR BRESCIA



A VILLA IN THE HILLS NEAR BRESCIA





COURTYARD OF VILLA ON PADUA VICENZA ROAD



COURTMARD OF VILLA ON PADIA VICENZA ROAD





COURTYARD OF VILLA ON PADUA VICENZA ROAD





SMALL VILLA ON PADUA VICENZA ROAD



VILLA NEAR MESTRE





VILLA NEAR MESTRE



CASINO NEAR MOGLIANO



VILLA NEAR MESTRL



VILLA NEAR ASOLO





VILLA BORGHESE NEAR SCARPERLA, TUSCANY





LIME KILN AT PADUA



STABLE OF VILLA PORTO AT DUEVILLE



ENTRANCE TO CONVENT AT PIETRASANTA



INN OUTSIDE ROML





SMALL VILLA NEAR BREGANZE





CHAPEL AND FARMGROUP AT MESTRINO





ENTRANCL TO COTTAGE



COURTYARD OF HOUSE IN TYROL



FARMHOUSE IN VENETO



COTTAGE IN THE TYROL





CHAPEL OF VILLA NEAR LAKE ISEO





FARM BUILDING IN TUSCAWA



VILLA ENTRANCE IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA



VIII.A AT BASSANO, SECTION I. A. R. C. AMBULANCE



NEAR MESTRE





EXTERIOR OF VENETIAN KITCHEN



FARMHOUSE NEAR VERONA





ALL THAT EXISTS OF A VERY ELABORATE VILLA GROUP AT QUINTO, BY PALLADIO



HOUSE AT CRICOLI, PALLADIO'S FIRST DESIGN





VILLA EMO



PALLADIAN VILLA NEAR ROVIGO





VILLA EMO AT FANZOLO, BY PALLADIO



LARM IN TUSCANY





REAR OF VILLA EMO



SMALL VILLA NEAR PADUA



VILLA MEAR ASOLO



VILLA NEAR PISTOIA





FARMYARD NEAR LAKE ISEO



FARMYARD AT POVEGLIANO





BALCONY RAILING AT VICENZA





DETAIL OF VILLA ROTONDA



DOORWAY IN PADUA





I FIESOLE



FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA



FARM IN THE VENETO



FARMHOUSE NEAR THE FRONT, VENETIA





FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA





SMALL HOUSE IN THE ROWAN CAMPAGNA





NEAR LIRINO, VENETO



CHAPLE NEAR BRESCIA



HOUSE ON THE BAY OF NAPLES



GATES OF VILLA BORGHESE, NEAR ANZIO





NEAR VICENZA



LARMHOU'SE IN LOMBARDY



FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA



HOU'SE NEAR LONGARA





HOUSE IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA



VILLA ON THE BRENTA CANAL



HOUSE IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA



CHURCH AND FARM NEAR LUCCA





VILLA VALMARANA AT LISTERA, DESIGNED BY PALLADIO

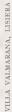




VILLA VALMARANA, LISIERA













TUSOAN FARM AT FIESOUE





ROADSIDE INN, ROMAN CAMPAGNA



ROADSIDE CHAPEL, ROMAN CAMPAGNA





FARMHOUSE NEAR CECCHINA



FARMGROUP IN PIEDMONT





NEAR TURIN



VENETIAN FARMHOUSE 59





SMALL FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA



HOUSE NEAR LAKE ISEO





ENTRANCE TO FARM BUILDING NEAR VANCIMUGLIO



FARMHOUSE IN PIEDMONT





FARMHOUSE IN FIEDMONT



VILLA IN PIEDMONT



VILLA NEAR VICENZA



VILLA TORNIERI, NEAR VICENZA





VILLA TORNIERI



VILLA TORNIERI





CONVENT AT ASOLO



COURTYARD IN VENETIA



HOUSE IN ISEO



CARMHOUSE IN THE VENETO





FARMHOUSE IN VENETIA





FARMHOUSE IN PIEDMONT



COTTAGE IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA



GARDEN GATE NEAR MONTEGALDA



NEAR LAKE GARDA





HOUSE NEAR PIETRASANTA, TUSCANY





LUNCHEON AFTER A REVIEW AT MONTEGALDA



CHAPEL NEAR CITTADELLA



MILITARY FESTIVAL AT ORGIANA



WAYSIDE SHRINE NEAR ASOLO





FARMHOUSE IN PIEDMONT





HOUSE IN TUSCANY



SMALL VILLA NEAR CITTADELLA





(ASINO AT BERTESINA ATTRIBUTED TO PALLADIO



VILLA AT PIAZZOLA



VILLA NEAR STANGA



VILLA NEAR VICENZA





VILLA AT PIAZZOLA

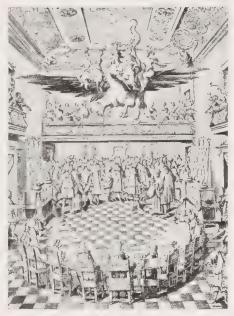


VILLA AT PIAZZOLA ATTRIBUTED TO PALLADIO





VILLA AT PIAZZOLA IN 1685 SHAM BATTLE



DINNER AT PIAZZOLA - FROM A CONTEMPORANEOUS ENGRAVING



VENETIAN COTTAGE



TUSCAN FARM





VENETIAN VILLA NEAR VICENZA



INTERIOR AT ASOLO



HOUSE AT ASOLO



INTERIOR OF VILLA REZZONICO, NEAR BASSANO





VILLA RIZZONICO NFAR BASSANO



NEAR VICENZA



VILLA REZZONICO NEAR BASSANO



VILLA REZZONICO NFAR BASSANO





COURTYARD NEAR LAKE ISEO



DOVE COIE AT OSPITALETTO





ENTRANCE TO FARM NEAR ABBIATEGRASSO





GARDEN OF PALLAZZO DALLE ORE, VICENZA



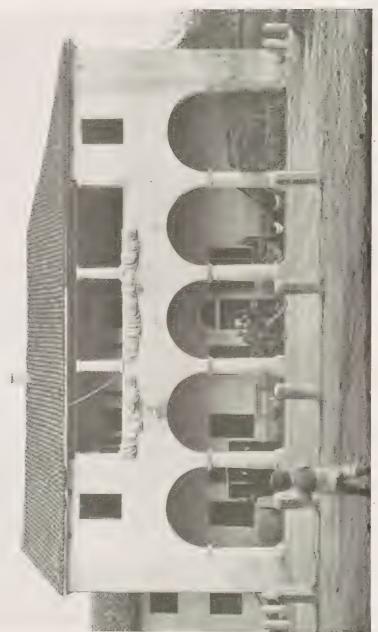
VILLA CASINO AT ASOLO





VILLA NEAR CECCHINA





SMALL HOUSE NEAR VICENZA





OLD HOUSE NEAR CREAZZO





COURTYARD OF FARMHOUSE AT MURELLE, (PLATE 124 IN VOLUME ONE)



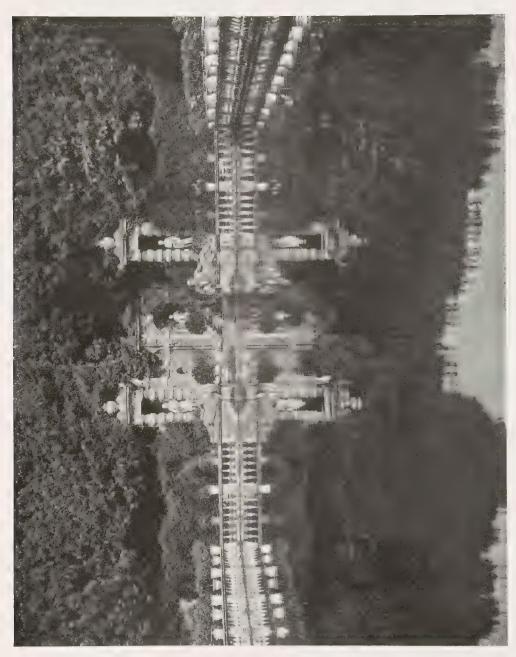


ENTRANCE TO VILLA MARLIA



VII.LA MARLIA





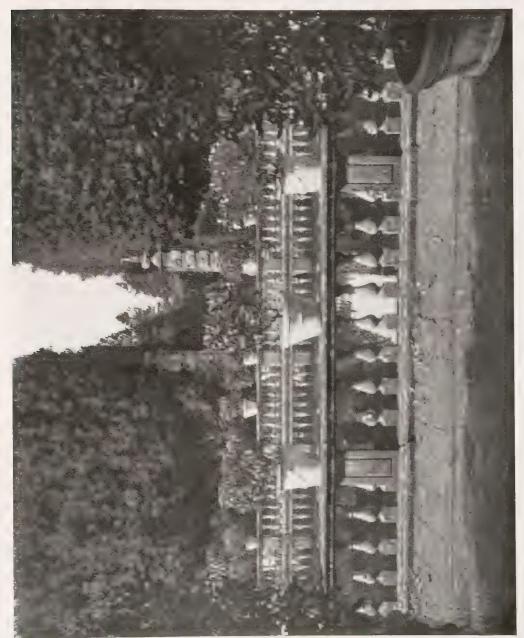
POOL IN LEMON GARDEN VILLA MARLIA





GARDEN GATE AT MARLIA





POOL IN LEMON GARDEN VILLA MARLIA

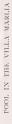




GARDEN THEATRE AT MARLIA









IN GREZZANO





VILLA MARLIA, STABLES



STABLE VILLA MARLIA



VILI 4 MARLIA



VILLA MARLIA





SMALL VILLA AT SOMMACAMPAGNA





VILLA AT MONTECCHIO MAGGIORE



VILLA WITH TERRACE NEAR FLORENCE



COURT FACADE OF VILLA AT SOMMACAMPAGNA



TUSCAN FARMHOUSE NEAR LUCCA





FARMHOUSE NEAR PISTOIA



COURTYARD AT VILLAFRANCA



VENETIAN GATE



STREET FACADE OF HOUSE AT MOTTA





COURTYARD OF HOUSE AT MOTTA





WELL IN COURTYARD, MOTTA



VENETIAN FARMHOUSE





VILLA LIOY AT VANCIMUGLIO BY BERTOTTI SCAMOZZI



PORCH OF HOUSE AT ESTL





VILLA LIOY



SMALL CASINO AT MONTECCHIO PRECALCINO



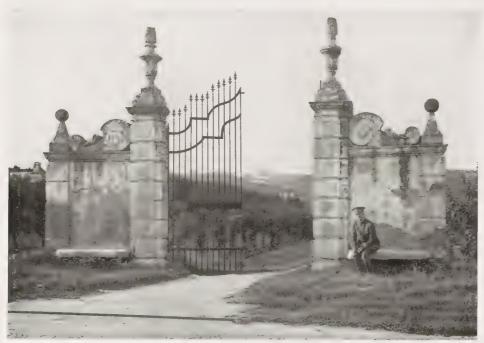


STEPS ON MONTE BERRICO ATTRIBUTED TO PALLADIO



GATES IN VENETIA





GATE ON VERONA ROAD



GATE ON VERONA ROAD









SMALL VILLA AT PALAZZUOLA





SMALL CASINO AT PALAZZUOLA ATTRIBUTED TO BRAMANTE



HOUSE NEAR ROVIGO WITH THRESHING FLOOR





CASINO OF VILLA BERCHET



VILLA BERCHET NEAR MESTRE





VILLA BERCHET AT CARPLNEDO NIAR MISTRE





VIILA AF FRATTA BY PALLADIO



WELL HEAD VILLA BERCHET





VIIIA AL FRATIA POLISINE BY PALLADIO



WELLHEAD AT FRATTA





VILLA AT FRATTA POLESINE, DESIGNED BY PALLADIO





IRONWORK AT FIRENZUOLA



TRONWORK NI AR ABBIATEGRASSO



IRONWORK NEAR VICENZA



IRONWORK NEAR ISEO





ENTRANCE TO THE VILLA ROTONDA, BY PALLADIO





VILLA ROTONDA NEAR VICENZA





VILLA ROTONDA





VILLA AT ABBIATEGRASSO



HOUSE NEAR PIETRASANTA





VILLA AMICI NEAR ROWE





VILLA AMICI



VILLA AMEGI





VILLA AMICI, NEAR ROME



VILLA AT MOTTA



VILLA NEAR LONGARE



VILLA AT ABBIATEGRASSO





VILLA AT ABBIATEGRASSO





VILLA NEAR MARINO, ALBAN HILLS





VILLA AT ORGIANO



VILLA NEAR MARINO





ORGIANO, VENETIA



ORGIANO





SMALL HOUSE NEAR ROME



TUSCAN FARMHOUSE





FARMHOUSE NEAR MESTRE





NEAR MILAN, LOMBARDY



NEAR MILAN, LOMBARDY





GATE TO PALLADIO'S VILLA, VANCIMUGLIO





VILLA AT VANCIMUGLIO, BY PALLADIO



VILLA AT VANCIMUGLIO, BY PALLADIO





NEAR ISEO



NEAR FIESOLE





VILLA AT MASER BY PALLADIO





GARDEN CASINO AT CAPRAROLA BY VIGNOLA





CASINO AT CAPRAROLA, DESIGNED BY VICAOLA





GARDEN OF CASINO AT CAPRAROLA





DETAIL OF CASINO AT CAPRAROLA



DETAIL OF CASINO AT CAPRAROLA





OPENING IN GARDEN WALL VILLA FARNESE AT CAPRAROLA



ASINO, GARDEN SIDE





CASINO GARDEN AT CAPRAROLA



DINING ROOM CAPRAROLA

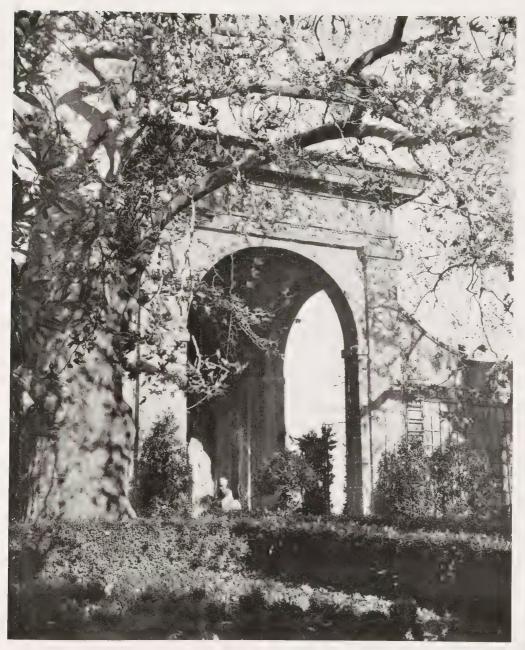


VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA



DINING ROOM IN THE VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA





GARDEN ENTRANCE VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA





STAIRCASE IN THE VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA





STAIR IN THE VILLA FARNESE



STAIR HALL CELLING VILLA FARMESE





FARMHOU'SE COURTYARD



INTERIOR COURT VILLA FARNESE





INTERIOR COURT VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA



VILLA ON VICENZA PADIA ROAD





CAPRAROLA



(APRAROLA



GATE NORTH OF ROME



TYROLESE TRONWORK IN ASOLO







GARDEN SEAT, VICENZA







OUTSIDE ROME





TABLE AT CAPRAROLA



TABLE AT ASOLO



WOODEN STAIRS AT BASSANO



FURNITURE IN VILLA AT ASOLO





CEILING AT VICLNZA





DETAIL VILLA FARNESE, CAPRAROLA



IRONWORK AT VICENZA





VILLA PORTO NEAR DULIVILLE





VILLAGE FOUNTAIN NEAR LAKE ISEO



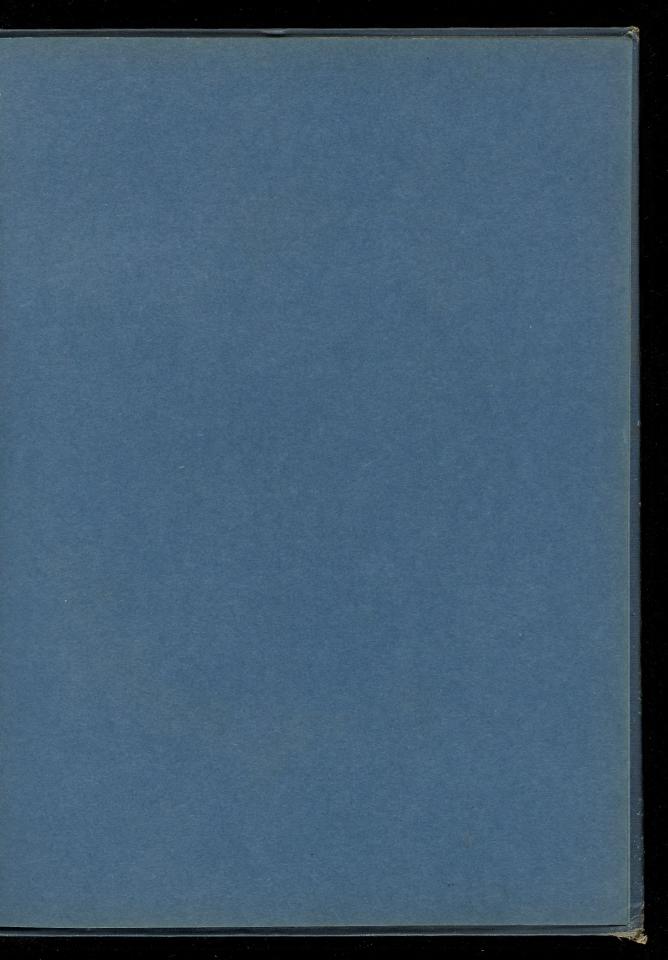


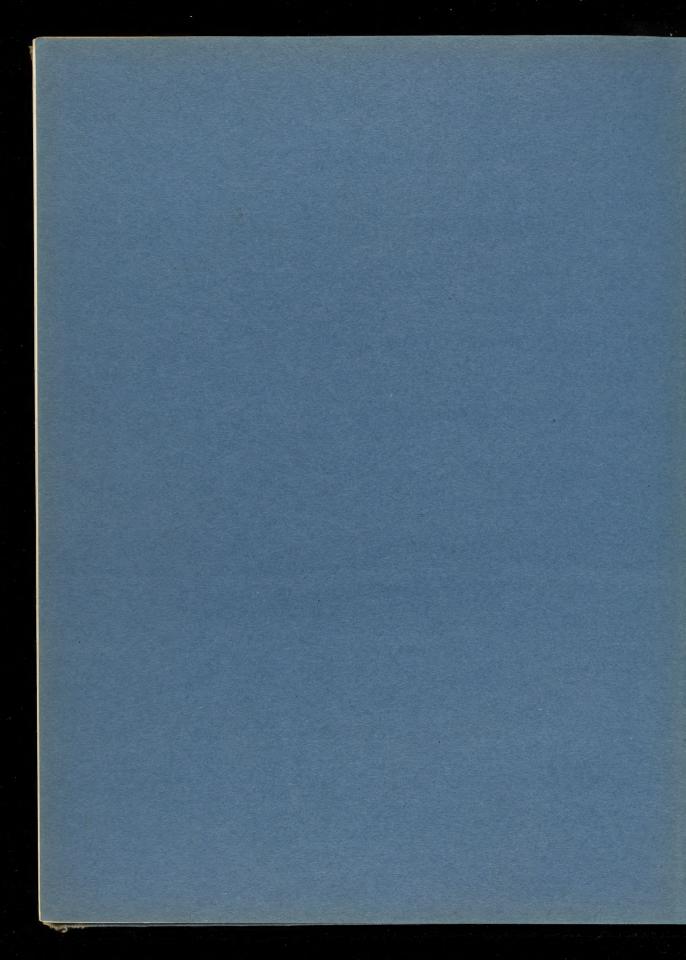
DETAIL OF FOUNTAIN NEAR ISEO



DETAIL OF FOUNTAIN NEAR ISEO









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